



Photo by Mark Washington/The Portland Observer

## Roseway Vision Planted

Friends of Trees board member Elizabeth Skorohodov, plants a tree Saturday on the city park blocks dividing Northeast 72<sup>nd</sup> Avenue in the Roseway neighborhood. Skorohodov's efforts are part of a large-scale Roseway Vision tree beautification project, planting 80 tall shade trees in the midway green space that stretches along four blocks.

## Countries Sierra Leone of Africa

Country looks for return to peaceful past

BY RON WEBER  
THE PORTLAND OBSERVER

Although the capitol is named Freetown, those who founded Sierra Leone had their roots grounded in slavery. The country touches the Atlantic Ocean and is bordered on its sides by Liberia and Guinea. It was formed in 1787 as a home for freed slaves, first from England and later from the Americas.

While Sierra Leone provides much of one of the world's most valuable treasures, that of diamonds, a great deal of the people live in dire poverty and a state of war. Unlike the large middle class population of the United States, most residents of Sierra Leone are either rich or very poor. English is the official language, but most resident also speak local tribal dialects. This country is one of the smallest on the African continent with 4 million people.

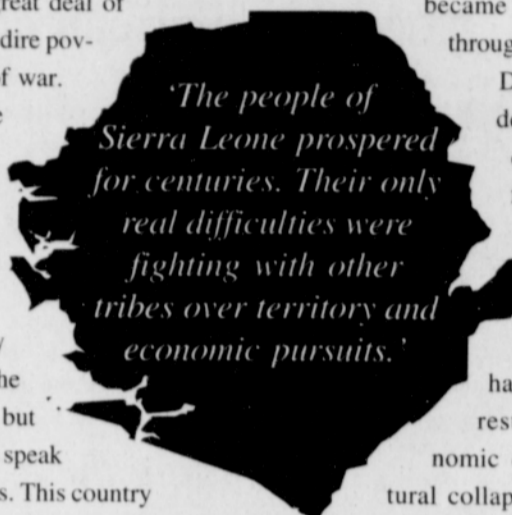
Sierra Leone has seen better times. Humans began inhabiting the area more than two and one half centuries before the birth of Christ. Livestock such as cattle were reared and plants were grown across the region, including vegetables, rice, millet, and yams. Skilled laborers worked with iron as far back as 600 BC. Gold, diamonds, and silver were mined to make expensive rings, necklaces, ornaments, and trinkets.

The people of Sierra Leone prospered for centuries. Their only real difficulties were fighting with other tribes over territory and

economic pursuits. However this all began to change during the 15<sup>th</sup> Century when the Portuguese started inhabiting the country. Over the next several centuries, Europeans from several countries, including Portugal, England, France, and Spain, would fight over the newly discovered lands in Northwest Africa. In 1808, the British declared the area part of the Crown Colonies. They abolished slave trade and settled free English slaves there, between 1808 and 1860. Freetown continued to grow rapidly and became the center for trade throughout the entire region.

During the 1950s, residents began to rise up, demanding freedom from British rule. Finally on April 27, 1961, Sierra Leone was granted freedom. Although it has seen political unrest, tribal wars, economic devastation, agricultural collapse and civil war, its inhabitants remain true to their motherland. In July of 1999, Sierra Leone's President Kabbah signed a plan calling for an end to warfare.

Much is being done to fight poverty, economic difficulties and AIDS. The United States, along with several European countries is sending financial aid and contributions of food. Not surprising are life expectancy figures of both men and women in the mid to high 40s. As the country continues to receive aid and repair itself politically, there are high hopes that Sierra Leone can one day return to the peaceful and prosperous nation it once was.



## Thanksgiving, a Cultural Exchange

Celebration is nation's first multicultural holiday



Thanksgiving is the first great multicultural holiday for Americans, thanks to Native Americans who taught the Puritans how to adapt to a strange new world, says a University of California at Davis historian.

"This was a new environment for the English because of the differing nature of American wilderness," says Clarence Walker, an authority on the history of American race relations.

"England had been farmed for centuries, and the land was not heavily forested," Walker adds. "In the New World, because of the Indian slash-and-burn agriculture, land had reforested itself, and it would have to be cleared."

In a spirit of cooperation, Native Americans taught their English neighbors in the Plymouth settle-

ment — mostly artisans and not farmers — to raise crops in the unfamiliar soils and how to trap animals for food and build nets and baskets to catch fish.

The Indians also helped the English survive by helping them construct homes and by serving as cultural mediators. Squanto, for instance, forestalled initial hostility between the English and native tribes that could have driven the Puritans away, Walker says.

Although the Puritans faced being starved out as other early English settlements would be in the 1600s along the American coast, Walker says Thanksgiving became a story of American success. It was celebrated as a New England holiday long before President Lincoln declared it a national holiday in 1863.

## Automation Kills 60 Airport Jobs

Parking cashiers to be replaced by machines

Almost all of the 60 cashiers at Portland International Airport who handle parking payments will be replaced by machines next fall, under a plan approved by the Port of Portland commission.

The \$7.9 million retrofit is expected to make it quicker for drivers to leave the airport's parking area, said Dan Brame, Port parking system manager.

Officials say the workers targeted for job losses are contract laborers employed by Ace Parking.

"The cashiers will most likely move into other positions if they're interested or able," said airport spokesman Steve Johnson. "They probably will not see layoffs, but it's a little difficult to say at this point in time."

Airport officials said they don't expect parking rates to change as a result of the new system. Parking

revenue will pay for the remodeling, which is expected to cost about \$32 million.

Traffic at the payment stations backs up in the evenings, the airport's busiest hours, Brame said.

Under the new system, motorists will pay for parking at self-serve machines in the airport parking garage or the long-term parking lot — before they reach their parked cars. Waiting times at the 20 machines that are planned should be minimal compared with the wait at the current eight exit lanes, Brame said.

The machines will electronically stamp motorists' parking tickets, validating that parking fees were paid. A final automated station will check the ticket before raising an exit-gate arm.

Associated Press contributed to this report.



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